

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAB-01

/056 W

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R 142215Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3028

INFO PAN CANAL

USCINCSO

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PN PFOR PINT

SUBJ: PRESIDENT LAKAS' SPEECH AT CADE-75

REF: PANAMA 2769

SUMMARY. KEY POINTS IN SPEECH BY PRESIDENT LAKAS MAY 9 BEFORE BUSINESSMEN EXECUTIVES' ANNUAL CONVENTION WERE: (1) WHEN 1903 TREATY WAS SIGNED NEITHER SIGNATORY CONTEMPLATED THAT U.S. WOULD ESTABLISH FULL-FLEDGD GOVERNMENT; (2) PANAMA DOES NOT WANT TO TAKE THE CANAL FROM THE U.S., BUT PANAMA WANTS WHAT IS HERS THE LAND- AND HE AND HIS BROTHER OMAR TORRIJOS ARE READY TO DO "ANYTHING" TO ACCOMPLISH THIS, BUT FIRST DIALOGUE MUST BE USED; (3) THE NEGOTIATIONS WERE GOING WELL; 4) SECRECY IS NECESSARY IN NEGOTIATING BECAUSE EXTREMISTS IN BOTH COUNTRIES WOULD LIKE TO DISRUPT THE TALKS; (5) PANAMA HAS PROVED IT IS A FRIEND OF THE U.S. AND THE "GREAT" NORTH AMERICAN PEOPLE, WILL DO JUSTICE TO ITS FRIEND, PANAMA; (6) PEOPLE SHOULD HAVE FAITH IN THE NEGOTIATIONS; (7) PANAMA IS DOING BETTER ECONOMICALY THAN MANY OTHER COUNTRIES; AND (8) GENERAL TORRIJOS IS THE ONLY LEADER PANAMA HAS.

1. LAKAS OPENED HIS SPEECH AT THE PANAMANIAN ASSOCIATION OF BUSINESS

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EXECUTIVES' (APEDE) 10TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE (CADE-75) WITH AN

ANGRY REFERENCE TO THE "INSULTING" AND "SENIGRATING" LETTER WHICH RICARDO CUCALO, PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PRIVATE ENTERPRISE (CONEP), HAD SENT TO HIM AND OTHER TOP GOP OFFICIALS (SEE REFTEL). HE THEN PROCEEDED TO DISCUSS THE TREATY NEGOTIATIONS AND U.S.- PANAMANIAN RELATIONS.

2. LAKAS ASSERTED THAT WHEN THE CANAL TREATIES WERE SIGNED, NO ONE IN EITHER COUNTRY PERCEIVED THERE WOULD BE COMMISSARIES, POST OFFICES, POLICE, COURTS, OR A "NATION WITHIN A NATION". NOW PANAMA IS EVEN DENIED THE LICENSE TO CARRY THE ZONIONS' MAIL AND SUPPLY OTHER SIMILAR FUNCTIONS OR TO SAY THIS IS "OUR CANAL ZONE WHERE A NORTH AMERICAN CANAL EXISTS."

3. WHILE LAKAS DENIED BEING AN EXTREMIST AND SAID HE DID NOT WANT TO DRIVE THE GRINGOS FROM THE CANAL, HE, HIS BROTHER TORRIJOS, AND OTHER PANAMANIAN WANTED WHAT WAS THEIRS - LAND. WHEN LAND WAS INVOLVED, ONE WOULD DO "ANYTHING." HE SAID THAT THEY WERE NOT MAKING THREATS BUT ALSO WOULD NOT CONTINUE TO ALLOW THEMSELVES TO BE INSULTED.

4. HE URGED, HOWEVER, THAT PEACEFUL MEANS SHOULD FIRST BE USED AND AND SAID A DIALOGUE WITH THE U.S. WAS UNDERWAY. IN AN OBVIOUS REFERENCE TO RECENT CONFLICTING STATEMENTS CONCERNING THE NEGOTIATIONS, HE SAID THE TALKS RUN HOT AND COLD. THE LAST TIME HE HAD A REPORT CONCERNING THE NEGOTIATIONS ON HIS DESK, "EVERYTHING WAS GOING WELL." SECRECY IN THE NEGOTIATIONS WAS NECESSARY BECAUSE EXTREMISTS IN BOTH COUNTRIES WOULD USE INFORMATION TO DAMAGE BOTH COUNTRIES SO THAT THEY CANNOT "LIVE AS SISTERS."

5. PANAMA AND PANAMANIAN HAD PROVEN TO BE TRUE FRIENDS OF THE U.S. AND LAKAS SAID, "...I BELIEVE IN THIS GREAT (AMERICAN) PEOPLE AND THAT THE TIME WILL ARRIVE IN WHICH IT WILL STOP AND SAY: 'WE MUST GIVE JUSTICE TO THIS COUNTRY, OUR FRIEND, WHICH IS PANAMA.'" HE THEN APPEALED TO HIS AUDIENCE TO CONVERT THEMSELVES INTO AMBASSADORS TO WORK TOWARD, NOT AGAINST, A SOLUTION, BECAUSE BAD THINGS, ONCE STARTED, ARE HARD TO TERMINATE. HE URGED THEM NOT TO "HEAT UP THE HEADS OF OUR YOUTH"; INSTEAD, THEY SHOULD HAVE FAITH IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. NO ONE IN THE GOP, LAKAS ASSURED HIS AUDIENCE, "IS AUTHORIZED TO SIGN ANYTHING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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UNLESS IT FIRST PASSES THROUGH A PLEBISCITE."

6. LAKAS CONCLUDES HIS SPEECH WITH A PLEA THAT THE GOVERNMENT BE ALLOWED TO NEGOTIATE: "I BELIEVE, GENTLEMEN, THAT THE TWO NATIONS ARE...FRIENDS. THERE HAVE BEEN ERRORS IN THE PAST.. ERRORS ON BOTH SIDES; BECAUSE OF THIS EXISTS THE OPEN DIALOGUE; BECAUSE OF THIS WE ARE NEGOTIATING; WE ARE GOING TO ARRIVE AT SOMETHING; AND IF WE ARE NOT IN AGREEMENT;, WE WILL NOT GIVE IT

OUR AFFIRMATIVE VOTE... BUT LET'S GIVE THE GOVERNMENT A CHANCE TO
NEGOTIATE, BECAUSE NO ONE SELLS OUT THE FATHERLAND."

7. COMMENT: LAKAS' SPEECH WAS CHARCTERRISTICALLY BLUNT AND
FORCEFUL. HE WAS CLEARLY ANGRY OVER CONEP PRESIDENT'S LETTER.
THE PRESS REPORTED ONLY PARTS OF HIS SPEECH, OMITTING HIS ANGRY
REFERENCE TO THE CONEP LETTER AND HIS EXPRESSION OF WILLINGNESS TO
"DO ANYTHING" AS A LAST RESORT TO OBTAIN FOR PANAMA WHAT IS HERS -
THE CANAL ZONE LAND. HIS DEEP FRIENDSHIP AND RESPECT FOR THE
AMERICAN PEOPLE CAME THROUGH STRONGLY AS DID HIS PLEA TO THE
BUSINESSMEN - MANY OF WHOM ARE THE GOP'S OPPONENTS - TO REFRAIN
FROM IMPEDING A SOLUTION TO THE CANAL PROBLEM AND FROM STIRRING
UP THE EMOTIONS OF PANAMANIAN YOUTH. FULL TEXT OF SPEECH IN
SPANISH AND EMBASSY'S FREE TRANSLATION IS BEING POUCHED ARA/PAN.
JORDEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESIDENT, AGREEMENTS, SPEECHES, CANALS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975PANAMA02847
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750170-1059
From: PANAMA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750553/aaaabwas.tel
Line Count: 130
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 PANAMA 2769
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 SEP 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <12 SEP 2003 by SmithRJ>; APPROVED <16 OCT 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESIDENT LAKAS' SPEECH AT CADE-75
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PN, (LAKAS, DEMETRIO B)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006